

# Slavery and the Bible.

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A TRACT FOR THE TIMES,

BY

REV. PHILIP SCHAFF, D. D.

1. Cor. VII. 2 -22 : "Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called. Art thou called being a servant, care not for it : but if thou mayest be free, use it rather. For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman : likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant."

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HAGERSTOWN, MD., February 4, 1861.

*Rev. Dr. P. Schaff:*

Dear Sir:—We the undersigned having listened with profound interest to your very able and learned sermon, delivered at the union meeting in the Lutheran Church last night, in Hagerstown, on the subject of the Bible view of Slavery, to a very large audience; and believing that the extensive dissemination of such views, at this time, will produce great good, we therefore respectfully ask a copy of the same for publication in a form for general circulation.

With sentiments of the highest esteem and regard we are

Yours Respectfully,

LEWIS M. HARBAUGH,  
M. S. BARBER,  
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DAVID ZELLER,  
J. B. MCKEE,  
W. D. LEVY.

The same discourse in substance was afterwards delivered by invitation in the German Reformed church at Mercersburg, Pa., and in the Lutheran College church at Gettysburg, Pa., and likewise requested for publication. It was then written out in this enlarged form and is now offered to the public with the hope that, under the blessing of God, it may do all the good which its friends desire.

Theological Seminary, Mercersburg, Pa., March, 1861.



# SLAVERY AND THE BIBLE.

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## THE ORIGIN OF SLAVERY.

The Bible, which we acknowledge as the infallible source and supreme rule in matters of religion and morals, commences with the highest and noblest view of man by representing him as the bearer of the image of God and placing him at the head of the whole creation. The divine image, whatever it may be besides, necessarily implies the idea of personality, that is reason and will, or intelligence and freedom. By these inestimable gifts man is far elevated above the brute, reflects the glory of his Maker, and is capable of communion with Him.

With this primitive conception and condition of man slavery or involuntary and perpetual servitude is incompatible. It has no place in paradise. God created man male and female, and thus instituted marriage and the family relation before the fall, but not slavery. The only slave then could have been Eve, but she was equally the bearer of the divine image and the loving and beloved partner of Adam. In the language of a distinguished English commentator, "the woman was made of a rib out of the side of man; not made out of his head, to top him—not out of his feet, to be trampled upon by him—but out of his side, to be equal with him—from under his arm, to be protected—and from near his heart to be beloved."

But man fell from his original state by the abuse of his freedom in an act of disobedience, and was consequently driven from paradise. Sin is the first and worst kind of slavery, and the fruitful source of every other intellectual, moral, and physical degradation. In this sense every sinner is a slave to his own appetites and passions, and can only attain to true freedom by the Christian salvation. Hence the Saviour says: "Whosoever committeth sin is the sery-



ant (*doulos*, slave) of sin.... If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." (John viii. 34–36.)

Slavery then takes its rise in sin, and more particularly in war and the law of brute force. Lust of power, avarice and cruelty were the original motives, kidnapping, conquest in war, and purchase by money were the original methods, of depriving men of their personal freedom and degrading them to mere instruments for the selfish ends of others.

But when the institution was once generally introduced, most slaves were born such and were innocently inherited like any other kind of property. Slaveholding became an undisputed right of every freeman and was maintained and propagated as an essential part of the family among all the ancient nations. In many cases also freemen voluntarily sold themselves into slavery from extreme poverty, or lost their freedom in consequence of crime.

#### THE CURSE OF NOAH.

Slavery, like despotism, war, and all kinds of oppression, existed no doubt long before the deluge, which was sent upon the earth because it was "filled with violence" (Gen. vi. 11). But it is not expressly mentioned till after the flood, in the remarkable prophecy of Noah, uttered more than four thousand years ago and reaching in its fulfilment, or at least in its applicability, even to our time and country. Bishop Newton, in his "Dissertations on the Prophecies," calls it "the history of the world in epitome." It is recorded in Genesis ix. 25–27, and in its metrical form according to the Hebrew reads as follows:

25. "Cursed be Canaan;  
A servant of servants\* shall he be unto his brethren.
26. Blessed be Jehovah, the God of Shem;  
And Canaan shall be a servant unto them.
27. God shall enlarge Japheth,

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\* עֶבֶד עֲבָדִים, *ebhed abhadim*, i. e., the meanest or lowest of servants; Hebrew form of intensifying the idea, as in the expressions *king of kings*, *holy of holies*, *song of songs*.



And he (Japheth) shall dwell in the tents of Shem ;  
And Canaan shall be a servant unto them."†

Noah, a preacher of righteousness before the flood, speaks here as a far-seeing inspired prophet to the new world after the flood. He pronounces a curse thrice repeated upon one of his grandsons, and a blessing upon two of his sons, yet with regard not so much to their individual as their representative character, and looking to the future posterity of the three patriarchs of the human family. Ham, the father of Canaan, represents the idolatrous and servile races; Shem, the Israelites who worshipped Jehovah, the only true and living God; Japheth, those gentiles, who by their contact with Shem were brought to a knowledge of the true religion. The curse was occasioned by gross indecency and profane irreverence to the aged Noah. It was inflicted upon Canaan, the youngest of the four sons of Ham, either because he was, according to an ancient Jewish tradition, the real offender, and Ham merely the reporter of the fact, or more probably because he made sport of his grandfather's shame when seen and revealed by Ham to his brothers, and was the principal heir of the irreverence and impiety of his father. But Ham was also punished in his son who was most like him, as he had sinned against his father.\* The whole posterity of Canaan was included in the curse because of their vices and wickedness (Levit. xviii. 24, 25), which God foresaw, yet after all with a merciful design as to their ultimate destiny.

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† עֶבֶד לָמוֹ, *ebhed lamo*, a servant to them, i. e., either to Shem and his posterity (as Hengstenberg takes it), or better to both Shem and Japheth which agrees best with "unto his brethren" v. 25. The English version, Luther and many others translate in v. 26. and 27. "his (Shem's) servant," and Ewald (Hebrew Grammar p. 459) asserts that *amo* may sometimes denote the singular, referring to Ps. xi. 7; Job xxii. 2; Deut. xxxii. 2 and Is. xl. 15. But Hengstenberg (in the second German edition of his Christology of the O. T. I. 32) maintains that *amo*, like *am*, of which it is only a fuller poetical form, signifies always the plural.

\* Some manuscripts of the Septuagint or Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures read "*Ham*" for *Canaan*, and the Arabic version "*the father of Canaan*," in the three verses of this prophecy.



The malediction of Noah was first fulfilled, on a large national scale, about eight hundred years after its delivery, when the Israelites, the favorite descendants of Shem, subdued the Canaanites, under the leadership of Joshua and under divine direction, and made some of their tribes "bondmen and hewers of wood and drawers of water for the house of God" (Joshua ix. 23-27). It was further fulfilled, when Solomon subdued the scattered remnants of those tribes (1 Kings ix. 20, 21; 2 Chron. viii. 7-9). Thus Canaan came under the rod of Shem. But he was also to be a servant to Japheth ("unto his *brethren*," v. 25, "unto *them*," v. 26 and 27). Under this view the prediction was realized in the successive dominion of the Persians, Greeks, and Romans, all descendants of Japheth, over the Phenicians and Carthaginians, who belong to the posterity of Canaan. The blessing of Noah was likewise strikingly fulfilled in the subsequent course of history reaching down to the introduction of Christianity. Shem was the bearer of the true religion before Christ. Japheth dwelled in the tents of Shem, literally, by conquering his territory under the Greeks and Romans, and spiritually, by the conversion of his vast posterity to the Christian religion which proceeded from the bosom of Shem. It is true here in the highest sense that the conquered gave laws to the conquerors.

But in point of fact both the curse and the blessing of Noah extend still further and justify a wider historical application. The curse of involuntary servitude, which in the text is confined to the youngest son of Canaan because of his close contact with the Israelites, has affected nearly the whole of the posterity of Ham, or those unfortunate African races which for many centuries have groaned and are still groaning under the despotic rule of the Romans, the Saracens, the Turks, and even those Christian nations who engaged in the iniquity of the African slave trade. Whether we connect it with this ancient prophecy or not, it is simply a fact which no one can deny, that the negro to this day is a servant of servants in our own midst. Japheth, on the other hand, the progenitor of half the human



race, who possesses a part of Asia and the whole of Europe, is still extending his posterity and territory in the westward course of empire, and holds Ham in bondage far away from his original home and final destination.

Slavery then is represented from the start as a punishment and a curse and is continued as such from generation to generation for these four thousand years, falling with special severity upon the African race, and involving the innocent with the guilty. A dark veil still hangs over this dispensation of Providence, which will be lifted only by the future pages of history. God alone, in his infinite wisdom and mercy, can and will settle the negro question by turning even a curse into a blessing and by overruling the wrath of man for his own glory. All his punishments have a disciplinary object and remedial character. The prophecy of Noah, it is true, has no comfort for poor Canaan, and no blessing for Ham. But David already looked forward to the time when "Ethiopia shall stretch out her hands unto God" (Ps. lxxviii. 31). The new dispensation gives us more light and hope and solves the mysteries of the old. The Gospel of Christ who praised the faith of a daughter of Canaan (Matth. xv. 28) and who died for all races, classes and conditions of man, authorizes us to look forward to the ultimate salvation of the entire posterity of Ham through the agency of Japheth and the severe but wholesome discipline of slavery. As Japheth dwelled in the eastern tents of Shem and was converted to his faith, so we may say that Ham dwells in the western tents of Japheth and is trained in America for his final deliverance from the ancient curse of bondage by the slow but sure operation of Christianity both upon him and his master, and for a noble mission to the entire mysterious continent of Africa.

#### PATRIARCHAL SLAVERY.

We next meet slavery as an established domestic institution among the patriarchs of the Jewish nation, as will appear from the following passages:

Gen. xii. 16: "And Abram had sheep, and oxen, and he-asses, and men-servants, and maid-servants, and she-asses and camels."



Gen. xiv. 14: "And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained servants, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen."

Gen. xvii. 23: "And Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all that were born in his house (slaves by birth), and all that were bought with his money (slaves by purchase), every male among the men of Abraham's house; and circumcised the flesh of their fore-skin in the selfsame day, as God had said unto him."

Gen. xx. 14: "And Abimelech took sheep, and oxen, and men-servants, and women-servants, and gave them unto Abraham, and restored him Sarah his wife."

Gen. xxiv. 35: "And the Lord hath blessed my master (Abraham) greatly: and he is become great: and he hath given him flocks, and herds, and silver, and gold, and men-servants and maid-servants, and camels, and asses."

Gen. xxvi. 14: "He (Isaac) had possession of flocks, and possession of herds, and great store of servants: and the Philistines envied him."

Gen. xxx. 43: "And the man (Jacob) increased exceedingly, and had much cattle, and maid-servants, and men-servants, and camels, and asses."

Gen. xxxii. 5: "And I (Jacob) have oxen, and asses, flocks, and men-servants, and women-servants."

Compare Job i. 3: "His substance also was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she-asses, and a very great household," (literally: very many servants; German: *grosse Dienerschaft*.)

The Hebrew term employed here and throughout the Old Testament generally for servants,\* is not necessarily degrading, like our *slave*; on the contrary *ebhed* means originally *laborer, worker*, and work was no disgrace among a people whose kings and prophets were called from the flock and the plough; yea, it is used in innumerable passages in the most honorable sense and applied to messengers of kings, to angels, to Moses, the prophets and the highest officers of the theocracy, in their relation to God. But in its usual literal sense it is universally understood to mean

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\* עֲבָד, *ebhed* (from the verb עָבַד, *abhad*, first to labor; then to serve, either man or God), plural עֲבָדִים, *abhadim*, for male servants: and שִׁפְחָה, *shiphcha*, plural שִׁפְחוֹת, *shephachoth*, or אִמָּה, *amah*, and אִמָּהוֹת, *amahoth*, for female servants. The latter terms express the close connection with the family.



*bond* servants in distinction from *hired* or voluntary servants, who were comparatively rare among ancient nations and are but seldom mentioned in the Old Testament.\* The slaves here spoken of were either born in the house (called *jelide baiith*) or purchased by money (*miknath cheseph*, Gen. xvii. 23), and owned in large numbers by the patriarchs and the patriarchal Job without any sense of guilt or impropriety on their side, and without a mark of disapprobation on the side of God. Their usual enumeration and collocation with sheep, oxen, asses and camels, although less degrading than Aristotle's definition of a slave as a "living tool," or "animated possession," † is very offensive to our modern ear and to our Christian taste, and shows the difference between the Old Testament and the New, where they are never mentioned in such connection. In one passage the servants are even put between the he-asses and the she-asses, in another between the cattle and the camels, and in a third between the gold and the camels.

But we have no right at all to infer from this fact that the patriarchs regarded and treated their servants no better than their favorite animals. Their whole character and religion justifies the opposite conclusion. They bought, but, as far as the record goes, they never sold any of their slaves. There is no trace of a slave traffic in the Old Testament. The patriarchal servitude was free from the low mercenary aspect, the spirit of caste and the harsh treatment, which characterized the same institution among all the heathen nations. It was of a purely domestic character and tempered by kindness, benevolence and a sense of moral and religious equality before God. This appears from the high

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\* The Hebrew term for *hired* servant is עֶבֶד, Ex. xii. 45 compared with 44; xxii. 14; Levit. xix. 13; Deut. xxiv. 14; Job. vii. 2. Josephus (*Antiquities* iv. 8, 38) explains the Jewish law as to hired servants thus: "Let it be always remembered, that we are not to defraud a poor man of his wages, as being sensible that God has allotted that wages to him instead of land and other possessions; nay, this payment is not at all to be delayed, but to be made that very day, since God is not willing to deprive the laborer of the immediate use of what he has labored for."

† Ὀργانون ζῶον, or κτῆμα ἐμψυχον.



confidence which Abraham reposed in Eliezer (Gen. xv. 2; xxiv. 2 ff.), and all those slaves whom he entrusted with arms (xiv. 14; comp. xxxii. 6; xxxiii. 1), and still more from the significant fact that he circumcised them (Gen. xvii. 23, 27), and thus made them partakers of the blessings and privileges of the covenant of Jehovah by divine direction (v. 12, 13).

#### JEWISH SLAVERY.

Between the patriarchal and the Mosaic period the Jews were themselves reduced to hard involuntary servitude in Egypt. The introduction to the ten commandments reminds them of their merciful deliverance "out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage," that they might be grateful for so great a mercy and show their gratitude by cheerful obedience to his will, and merciful conduct towards their servants (comp. Deut. v. 15; xv. 15).

Moses, or God through him neither established nor abolished slavery; he authorized and regulated it as an ancient domestic and social institution, which could not be dispensed with at that time, but he also so modified and humanized the same as to raise it far above the character of slavery among the gentiles, even the highly cultivated Greeks and Romans.—The moral law which is embodied in the decalogue, mentions "men-servants and maid-servants" twice, but evidently and most wisely in such general terms and connections as to be equally applicable to hired servants and bond servants. The fourth commandment protects the religious rights of the servants by securing to them the blessings of the Sabbath day; the tenth commandment guards the rights of the master against the passion and cupidity of his neighbor.

The civil law makes first an important distinction between the Hebrew and the Gentile servants. It regarded freedom as the normal and proper condition of the Israelite, and prohibited his reduction to servitude except in two cases, either for theft, when unable to make full restitution (Ex. xxii. 3), or in extreme poverty, when he might sell himself (Levit. xxv. 39). Cruel creditors sometimes forced insolv-



ent debtors into servitude (2 Kings iv. 1; Is. l. 1; Nehem. v. 5; comp. Matth. xviii. 25), but this was an abuse which is nowhere authorized. The Hebrew servant moreover was not to be treated like an ordinary bondman, and regained his freedom, without price, and with an outfit (Deut. xv. 14), after six years of service, unless he preferred from attachment or other reasons to remain in bondage to his master. The remembrance of Israel's bondage of Egypt and his merciful deliverance by the hand of the Lord, should inspire every Israelite with kindness to his bondmen. The jubilee, or every fiftieth year, when the whole theocracy was renewed, gave liberty to all slaves of Hebrew descent without distinction, whether they had served six years or not, and made them landed proprietors by restoring to them the possessions of their fathers. Consequently the law, in permitting the Hebrew to be sold, merely suspended his freedom for a limited period, guarded him during the same against bad treatment, and provided for his ultimate emancipation. This is clear from the principal passages bearing on the subject.

“If thou buy an Hebrew servant, six years he shall serve: and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing. If he came in by himself, he shall go out by himself; if he were married, then his wife shall go out with him. If his master have given him a wife, and she have born him sons or daughters; the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself. And if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free: then his master shall bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him for ever\*.” *Exod. xxi. 2-6.*

“And if thy brother that dwelleth by thee be waxen poor, and be sold unto thee; thou shalt not compel him to serve as a bond-servant: but as an hired servant, and as a sojourner, he shall be with thee, and shall serve thee unto the year of jubilee: and then shall he depart from thee, both he and his children with him, and shall return unto his own family, and unto the possession of his fathers shall he return. For they are my servants which I brought forth out of the land of Egypt: they shall not be sold as bondmen. Thou shalt not

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\* i. e., become permanent and inheritable property like the slaves of heathen origin (*Lev. xxv. 46*); or, as the Jewish doctors take it, till the year of jubilee. Such limitation seems to be justified by *Lev. xxv. 41, 10.*



rule over him with rigor: but shalt fear thy God." Levit. xxv. 39-43. Comp. Deuteron. xv. 12-18.

"This is the word that came unto Jeremiah from the Lord, after that the king Zedekiah had made a covenant with all the people which were at Jerusalem, to proclaim liberty unto them; that every man should let his man-servant, and every man his maid-servant, being an Hebrew or a Hebrewess, go free; that none should serve himself of them, to wit, of a Jew his brother." Jerem. xxxiv. 8, 9.

Concerning the heathen bondmen who constituted the great majority of slaves among the Hebrews, the law was more severe, and attached them permanently to their master and his posterity.

"Both thy bondmen and they bondmaids, which thou shalt have, shall be of the heathen that are round about you; of them shall ye buy bondmen and bondmaids. Moreover of the children of the strangers that do sojourn among you, of them shall ye buy, and of their families that are with you, which they begat in your land: and they shall be your possession. And ye shall take them as an inheritance for your children after you to inherit them for a possession; they shall be your bondmen for ever: but over your brethren the children of Israel, ye shall not rule one over another with rigor." Levit. xxv. 44-46.

But the Mosaic dispensation nowhere degraded even the heathen slave to mere property, or a thing, as the Roman law. It regarded and treated him as a moral and religious being, admitted him to the blessings of the covenant by circumcision (Gen. xvii. 12, 13, 23, 27; Exod. xii. 44), secured him the rest of the sabbath and the festival days and other religious privileges, and protected him against the passion and cruelty of the master and restored him to freedom in case he was violently injured in eye or tooth, that is, according to the spirit of the law, in any member whatever. Finally it numbered kidnapping, or forcible reduction of a freeman, especially an Israelite, to servitude in time of peace, among the blackest crimes, and punished it with death. Take the following passages which refer to all slaves:

"If a man smite his servant, or his maid with a rod, and he die under his hand; he shall be surely punished. Notwithstanding if he continue a day or two, he shall not be punished; for he is his money." Exod. xxi. 20, 21.

"If a man smite the eye of his servant, or the eye of his maid, that it perish, he shall let him go free for his eye's sake. And if he smite



out his servant's tooth, he shall let him go free for his tooth's sake." Exod. xxi. 26, 27.

"The seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant," etc., Exod. xx. 10.

. . . "that thy man-servant and thy maid-servant may rest as well as thou. And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt," etc. Deut. v. 14, 15. Comp. Deut. xvi. 11, 12, 14 with reference to the annual festivals.

"And he that stealeth a man, and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death." Exod. xxi. 16.

"If a man be found stealing any of his brethren of the children of Israel, and maketh merchandize of him, or selleth him; then that thief shall die; and thou shalt put evil away from among you." Deut. xxiv. 7.

Such guarantees contrast very favorably with the Roman slave code which knew of no civil and religious rights of the slave, reduced him to the level of mere property and gave the master authority to torture him for evidence and to put him to death. Hence we never read of slave insurrections among the Jews, as among the Greeks and Romans. The difference in treatment was the natural result of a different theory. For the Old Testament teaches the unity of the human race, which is favorable to general equality before the law, while heathen slavery rested on the opposite doctrine of the essential inferiority of all barbarians to the Greeks and Romans and their constitutional unfitness for the rights and privileges of freemen.

If we consider the low and degraded condition of the idolatrous heathen tribes, with whom the Jews in their early history came into contact, we have a right to think that slavery was an actual benefit to them and a training school from barbarian idolatry and licentiousness to the knowledge and worship of the true God. This would explain the more easily a passage, which is sometimes falsely quoted by Abolitionists as a conclusive argument against the fugitive slave law:

"Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant which is escaped from his master unto thee: he shall dwell with thee, even among you, in that place which he shall choose in one of thy gates, where it liketh him best: thou shalt not oppress him." Deut. xxiii. 15, 16.



This can, of course, not be understood as applying to all slaves indiscriminately, without involving the law in glaring self-contradiction; for the servants of the Jews were protected by law, like any other property (Exod. xx. 17), they had to be restored, if lost (Deut. xxii. 4; comp 1 Kings II. 39, 40), and passed as an inheritance from parents to children (Levit. xxv. 46); but it must refer, as all good commentators hold, to foreign slaves only, who escaped from heathen masters to the boundaries of the theocracy, and who, if returned, would have been punished with cruel tortures or certain death. Extradition, in such cases, would have been an act of inhumanity repugnant to the spirit of the Jewish religion. Such unfortunate fugitives found an asylum in Israel, as they did even in heathen temples, and since Constantine in every Christian church.

From all that has been said then thus far, we may conclude that, according to the Old Testament, the institution of involuntary and perpetual servitude dates from after the fall and first appears as a punishment and curse; that it was known and practised by the patriarchs; recognized and protected by the Mosaic legislation, but also softened and guarded against various abuses; and that every returning jubilee made an end to Jewish servitude. It does not appear, indeed, that slaves of heathen descent were included in the blessing of jubilee. Their exclusion would have to be explained on the ground of the necessary particularism of the old economy, which was intended merely as a national training school for the universal religion of the Gospel. But on the other hand, the fact that all slaves in Jewish families seem to have been circumcised (Gen. xvii. 12, 13, 23, 27), at least if they wished it (comp. Exod. xii. 44), and were thus incorporated into the Jewish church, seems to justify a more general application of the blessing of jubilee, to all slaves, or at least to all who were circumcised, whether of Jewish descent or not. The language in Levit. xxv. 10 makes no exceptions: "And yeshall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout the land *unto all the inhabitants thereof*: it shall be a jubilee unto you;



and ye shall return *every man* unto his possession, and ye shall return *every man* unto his family." At all events the jubilee was a type of that "acceptable year of the Lord" (Is. lxi. 1 ; Luke iv. 19) which gave spiritual deliverance to all, and will be finally realized in the restoration of all men to their original dignity, freedom and equality, through the Christian salvation from every form of bondage.

#### GREEK AND ROMAN SLAVERY.

Before we proceed to explain the relation of the New Testament to slavery, it may be well to cast a glance at the extent and character of this institution among those highly civilized heathen nations, among which Christianity was first established.

The ancient republics of Greece and Rome had no idea of general and inalienable rights of men. They consisted in the rule of a small minority of freemen over a mass of foreigners and slaves. The Greeks and Romans looked with aristocratic contempt upon all other nations as barbarians and unfit for freedom. Their philosophers and lawgivers regarded slavery as the natural, normal and perpetual condition of society and assumed a constitutional or essential difference between the free-born and the slaves. Aristotle calls a *doulos* or slave "an animated tool, just as a tool is a soulless slave." Occasionally slaves distinguished themselves by great talent or some special merit, and were then used as teachers, or were emancipated, or they bought their liberty. But these were exceptions, which confirmed the rule. The great mass remained in a degraded and wretched condition, whether they belonged to the State as the Helots in Sparta, or to individuals. An active slave trade was carried on, particularly in the Euxine, the eastern provinces, the coast of Africa, Britain, and in the city of Rome where human beings from every tongue and clime were continually offered for sale, generally as nature made them and with a scroll around their neck, on which their good and bad qualities were specified.

The Romans made no distinction between race and color



in this respect. All captives of war, whether Scythians, Phrygians, Nubians, Jews, Gauls, Spaniards, Britons, Germans, also insolvent debtors and criminals were generally sold into slavery. The distinguished Latin poets Terentius, and probably Plautus, the former an African, the latter an Italian by birth, were originally slaves, but acquired their freedom by their talents and industry ; and Horace, who moved in the highest circles of the Roman aristocracy, descended from a freedman. The Jewish synagogue at Rome consisted mostly of freedmen. During the Jewish war, Josephus tells us, ninety seven thousand Jews were made captives and either sold to individuals as cheap as horses, or condemned as slaves of the State to hard work in the Egyptian mines, or put to death.

Slavery extended over every province and embraced, according to Gibbon's low estimate, sixty millions, or at least one half of the entire population of the empire under the reign of Claudius ; but according to more recent calculations the slaves outnumbered the citizens three to one. For in Attica, the classical spot of Greece, there were, three hundred years before Christ, four hundred thousand slaves (who were counted per head, like cattle) to only twenty one thousand free citizens (exclusive, however, of women and minors), and ten thousand foreign residents. In Sparta the disproportion seems to have been still greater, and to keep down their numbers the Helots were sometimes cruelly and treacherously massacred by thousands. Many wealthy Romans possessed from ten to twenty thousand slaves for mere ostentation. Roman ladies of rank and fashion kept as many as two hundred for their toilet alone. The slaves did all kind of work in the house, the shop, and the kitchen. The Latin language has a great many names for the various classes into which they were divided according to their occupation.\*

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\* Those for instance who attended to the table alone, were subdivided into *pistores*, *coqui*, *fartores*, *obsonatores*, *structores*, *scissores*, *pocillatores* ; those who were employed for the wardrobe and toilet, into *vestiarii*, *textores*, *tonsores*, *ornatrices*, *ciniflones*, *unctores*, *balneatores*, etc. etc.



In the eyes of the Roman law till the time of the Antonines the slaves were in the fullest sense of the term the property of the master and reduced to the level of the brute. A distinguished writer on civil law thus describes their condition: "The slaves were in a much worse state than any cattle whatsoever. They had no head in the State, no name, no title, no register; they were not capable of being injured; they had no heirs and therefore could make no will; they were not entitled to the rights of matrimony, and therefore had no relief in case of adultery; nor were they proper objects of cognation and affinity, but of quasi-cognation only; they could be sold, transferred, or pawned, as goods or personal estate, for goods they were, and as such they were esteemed; they might be tortured for evidence, punished at the discretion of their lord, and even put to death by his authority; together with many other civil incapacities which I have no room to enumerate." Cato the elder expelled his old and sick slaves out of house and home. Hadrian, one of the most humane of the emperors, willfully destroyed the eye of one of his slaves with a pencil. Roman ladies punished their waiters with sharp iron instruments for the most trifling offences, while attending half dressed to their toilet. Such legal degradation and cruel treatment had the worst effect upon the character of the slaves. They are described by the ancient writers as mean, cowardly, abject, false, voracious, intemperate, voluptuous, also hard and cruel, when placed over others. A proverb prevailed in the Roman empire: "As many slaves as many enemies." Hence the constant danger of servile insurrections which more than once brought the republic to the brink of ruin and seemed to justify the severest measures in self-defense.

It is true, self-interest, natural kindness, and education had their due effect even among the heathen and prompted many masters to take proper care of their slaves. Seneca and Plutarch gave excellent advice which tended to mitigate the evil wherever it was carried out. Legislation also began to improve in the second century and transferred



the power over the life of the slave from the master to the magistrate. But at that time the humanizing influence of Christianity already made itself felt even upon its enemies and impregnated the atmosphere of public opinion.

Roman slavery then was far worse than Jewish servitude. It regarded and treated the slaves as chattles and things, while the latter still respected them as persons, provided for their moral and religious wants, and cheered them with the hope of deliverance in the year of jubilee.

Justice as well as due regard for our national honor and the influence of Christianity requires us also to place the Roman system of slavery far below the American, although the latter no doubt borrowed many obnoxious and revolting statutes from the Roman slave-code. Roman slavery extended over the whole empire and embraced more than one half of its subjects, American slavery is confined to the Southern States and to one eighth of our population; the former made no distinction between race and color, the latter is based on the inferiority of the African race; Rome legalized and protected the foreign slave trade, the United States long since prohibited it as piracy and thus placed the stigma of condemnation upon the original source of negro-slavery; the former treated the slaves as mere property, the latter distinctly recognize and protect them as men; the former cared nothing for the souls of the poor slaves, while the latter can never deny altogether the restraining, humanizing and ennobling influence of the Christian religion upon the master, nor refuse its benefits and privileges to the slave.

#### THE NEW TESTAMENT AND SLAVERY.

Such was the system of slavery when Christ appeared, to deliver the world from the bondage of sin and death and to work out a salvation for all races, classes and conditions of men.

The manner in which Christianity dealt with an institution so universally prevalent in its worst forms and so intimately interwoven with the whole private and public life



in the Roman empire, is a strong proof of its practical wisdom and divine origin. It accomplished what no other religion has even attempted before or since. Without interfering with slavery as a political and oeconomical question, without encouraging any revolution or agitation, without denouncing the character or denying the rights of the slaveholder, or creating discontent among the slaves, without disturbing the peace of a single family, without any appeals to the passions and prejudices of men on the evils and abuses of slavery, without requiring or even suggesting immediate emancipation, in one word, without changing the outward and legal relation between the two parties, but solemnly enforcing the rights and duties arising from it to both: Christ and the apostles, nevertheless, from within by purely spiritual and peaceful means, by teaching the common origin and common redemption, the true dignity, equality and destiny of men, by inculcating the principles of universal justice and love, and by raising the most degraded and unfortunate classes of society to virtue and piety, produced a radical moral reformation of the system and prepared the only effectual way for its gradual legitimate and harmless extinction. The Christian Church followed this example and dealt with the system of slavery in the same spirit wherever it found it as an established fact. Any other method would have either effected nothing at all, or done more harm than good. An attempt at sudden emancipation with such abundant materials for servile wars would have thrown the world into hopeless confusion and brought dissolution and ruin upon the empire and the cause of Christianity itself.

The relation of the Gospel to slavery wherever it still exists, remains the same to day as it was in the age of the apostles. The New Testament was written for all ages and conditions of society ; it knows no Mason and Dixon's line, and may be as profitably read and as fully practiced in South Carolina as in Massachusetts.

The position of the New Testament is neither anti-slavery, nor pro-slavery in our modern sense of the term, but rises



above all partizan views. It nowhere establishes or abolishes the institution of slavery, as little as monarchy or any other form of government; it neither sanctions nor condemns it; it never meddles with its political and financial aspects and leaves the system as to its policy and profitability to the secular rulers. But it recognizes, tolerates and ameliorates it as an existing and then universally established fact; it treats it under its moral bearings and enjoins the duties and responsibilities of masters and servants; it corrects its abuses, cures the root of the evil and provides the only rational and practical remedy for its ultimate extinction wherever it can be abolished legitimately and with benefit to both parties. Yet, in profound and far-seeing wisdom, it does all this in such a manner that its teachings and admonitions retain their full force and applicability, though every trace of involuntary and perpetual servitude should disappear from the earth.

Hence the unlearned reader of the New Testament seldom observes its allusions to slavery, and may read the Gospels and Epistles without dreaming of the fact, that at the time of their composition more than one half of the human race was kept in literal bondage. Our popular Versions have properly and wisely avoided the words *slaveholder* and *slave*—like the framers of the American Constitution—and have mostly substituted the words *master* and *servant*, which are equally applicable to a free state of society, or the general distinctions of superior and inferior, ruler and subject, which will continue to the end of time. It must be admitted, however, that the term *servant*, as its etymology from the Latin suggests, was originally employed in the menial sense and has acquired a nobler meaning under the influence of Christianity upon all domestic and social relations.

The Greek language has a number of terms for the various kinds of servants, six or seven of which occur in the New Testament.\* We will explain three as having a bearing upon the present discussion.

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\* *Θεράπων*, *therapon*, translated *servant* (*minister* would be better, to distin-



1) *misthios* and *misthotos* mean a *hired* servant or *hireling*, and are so translated in the five passages of the New Testament where they occur. They may be slaves and hired out by their masters, or they may not.

2) *doulos* is more frequently used than all other terms put together. We find it, if we made no mistake in counting, one hundred and twenty three times, namely seventy three times in the Gospels, three times in the Acts, thirty three times in the Epistles, and fourteen times in the Apocalypse.\* It is uniformly translated *servant* in our English Bible, except in seven instances in the Epistles and in Revelation, where it is rendered either *bond* or *bondman*.† *Doulos* (originally an adjective, *bound*, from the verb *deo*, to bind), like the Latin *servus*, means properly a *bond* servant, or a *slave*, especially one by birth, and is opposed to *eleutheros*, *free-born*, or *freed*, *made free*.‡ Yet like

guish it from *doulos*), occurs but once, and then of Moses, in an honorable sense, Hebr. iii. 5; ὑπέρτης, *hyperetes*, generally translated *officer*, sometimes *servant*, or *minister*, occurs several times in the Gospels and Acts, and once in the Epistles (1 Cor. iv. 1); διάκονος, *diakonos*, which the Common Version mostly renders *minister*, sometimes *servant*, and when used in its official sense, *deacon*; μισθιος and μισθωτός, *misthios*, *misthotos* (corresponding to the Hebrew שָׂכִיר) a *hired* servant; δοῦλος, *doulos* (see above); οἰκῆτης, *oiketēs*, a *domestic* *doulos* or *household* *servant* and so translated in Acts x. 7; παῖς, *pais*, often translated *servant*, sometimes *child*, the least ignominious term for slave, and rather a title of endearment like the Latin *puer* and the English *boy*.

\* Besides the masculine δοῦλος, the feminine δούλη occurs three times, twice of the Virgin Mary, the *handmaid* of the Lord (Luke i. 38, 48, and in a more general application Acts ii. 18); the neuter δούλον twice (Rom. vi. 19: Yield your members *servants* to righteousness); the noun δουλεία five times and is uniformly rendered *bondage*; the verb δουλεύω twenty five times, generally rendered to *serve*, sometimes to *be in bondage*; and the transitive verb δουλόω, to *bring into bondage*, to *enslave*, eight times.

† namely 1 Cor. xii. 13; Gal. iii. 28; Eph. vi. 8; Col. iii. 11; Rev. vi. 15; xiii. 16; xix. 13.

‡ Trench, in his little work on the *Synonyms of the New Testament*, N. York ed. 1857, p. 53, defines δοῦλος as "one in a permanent relation of servitude to another, and that altogether apart from any ministration to that other at the present moment rendered; but the δερῶπων is the performer of present services, without respect to the fact, whether as a freeman or as a slave he renders them; and thus there goes constantly with the word the sense of one whose services are tenderer, nobler, freer than those of the δοῦλος." Compare also J. Theod. Vömel, *Synonymisches Woerterbuch*, Francf. 1819, p. 78, 79 and 218, 219.



the Hebrew *ebhed*, of which it is the Greek equivalent in the New Testament, it is not necessarily degrading, but simply a term of government and may signify a subject from the highest to the lowest ranks. Ammonius, an ancient writer on Greek synonyms, of the fourth century, gives the word this general sense,\* and the Greeks called the Persians *douloi* as subjects of an absolute monarch. The Bible frequently uses the word of the highest and noblest kind of service, the voluntary service of God, which is perfect freedom, as St. Augustine says: *Deo servire vera libertas est*. Moses, the prophets, the apostles and all true Christians are called *douloi* or servants of God and Christ, as being entirely and for life, yet voluntarily and cheerfully devoted to his service.† St. Paul glories in this title,‡ and so does St. Peter, St. James, St. Jude, and St. John.§ It would be quite improper in any of these passages to substitute *slave* for *servant*.

3) *andrapodon*|| means always a *slave*, especially one *enslaved in war*. This term is degrading in its etymology and neuter gender, and is used in the vile and abject sense, when the slaves are statistically enumerated or otherwise represented as mere property, or chattles, or things. Now it is a remarkable fact, that the New Testament, which so frequently uses the term *doulos* and about half a dozen words more or less resembling it in meaning, never employs the term *andrapodon*, except once in the derivative

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\* Δούλοι, he says as quoted by Vömel, εἰσι καὶ οἱ ἡδονῶν, καὶ πάντες οἱ ὑποταγμένοι ὑπὸ τὸν βασιλέα (all who are subjected to the king).

† Compare Luke xii. 37: "Blessed are those servants whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching;" Acts xvi. 17: "These men are the servants of the most high God, which show unto us the way of salvation;" 1 Pet. ii. 16: "as the servants of God;" Rev. i. 1: "to show unto his servants;" x. 7: "declared to his servants the prophets;" xv. 3: "the song of Moses the servant of God;" xix. 5: "Praise our God, all ye his servants."

‡ Rom. i. 1: "Paul a servant (*doulos*) of Jesus Christ;" Gal. i. 10; Phil. i. 1; Tit. i. 1.

§ 2 Pet. i. 1; Jas. i. 1. Jude 1; Rev. i. 1.

|| ἀνδράποδον, either from ἀνὴρ and ποῦς, the foot of the conqueror placed on the neck of the conquered, to indicate complete subjugation, or from ἀνὴρ and ἀποδόσθαι, to sell a man.



compound, *andrapodistes*, a *man-stealer*, or *slave-trader*, and then in the worst possible company with murderers, whoremongers, liars, perjurers and other gross sinners.\* As the term is of very frequent occurrence among the classics and must have been perfectly familiar to the apostles, the omission is significant and must imply the condemnation of the idea involved in it. It suggests to us two different conceptions of slavery, the one represented by the word *doulos*, the other by the word *andrapodon*; the one prevailing among the Jews, the other among the heathen; the one which still regards and treats the slave as a person, the other which degrades him to mere property; the one recognized by the apostles, the other disowned by them as irreconcilable with the spirit of the Gospel.

Slavery indeed always implies the double relation of lordship or government, and of possession or property. The former makes the slave-holder simply a ruler and patron of his subject, and although liable to abuse, like every other kind of power in the hands of sinful and erring man, may be altogether unselfish, humane and beneficial, just as an absolute monarchy may be the best form of government in the hands of a good monarch who rules in the fear of God and with a single eye to the happiness of his subjects while incapable of self-government. The latter makes the slave-holder the proprietor or owner of the slave and gives him the legal—though not the moral—right to turn the *doulos* into an *andrapodon*, the person into a mere thing or “animated tool,” and to dispose of him as of any other article of merchandize for his own profit. The predominance of the one or the other of these ideas determines the character of the institution and tends either to the ele-

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\* 1 Tim. i. 10. The Common Version and most commentators translate this word *menstealer*, or *kidnapper*, who enslaves free persons and sells them, —a crime punished with death under the Old Testament, Exod. xxi. 16; Deut. xxiv. 7. But some dictionaries assign to *ἀνδραποδιστής* also the more general meaning of *slave-trader*, just as *κερματιστής* is not a *money-stealer*, but a *money-changer* (John ii. 14). It is pretty certain that the apostle would have embraced all persons engaged in the horrors of the African slave-trade under the same category and condemnation.



vation, or the degradation of the slave. In the Jewish servitude the governmental idea strongly prevailed over the mercenary; in the Roman, the mercenary over the governmental. The New Testament retains and recognizes the governmental idea as an existing fact, and nowhere denounces it as sinful in itself, but it divests it of its harshness and guards it against abuse, by reminding the master of his moral responsibility and inspiring him with kindness and charity to his slave as a brother in Christ and fellow-heir of the same kingdom of glory in heaven. But the mercenary idea is entirely ignored in the New Testament or indirectly condemned with every other form of selfishness. Hence we find not a word about traffic in men, about buying and selling human beings; the very idea is repugnant to the spirit of the Gospel. The slave, without distinction of race and color, is uniformly spoken of as a personal being clothed with the same moral rights and duties, redeemed by the same blood of Christ, sanctified by the same Spirit, and called to the same immortality and glory as his master. Wherever the governmental idea holds the mercenary so completely in check and yields to the influence of Christian morality, it may be a wholesome training school for inferior races, as it is in fact with the African negroes, until they are capable to govern themselves.

Christianity attaches comparatively little importance to slavery and freedom in the civil and political sense. Its mission lies far deeper. It is a new moral creation, which commences with the inmost life of humanity, although it looks to the resurrection of the body and the glorious liberty of the children of God as its final consummation. It is intensely spiritual in its nature and takes its position far above the temporal relations of this world, which is continually changing and passing away. Wholly occupied with the eternal interests and welfare of man, it sinks all the social distinctions of earth and time in the common sinfulness and guilt before God and the common salvation through Christ. Rising above the limits of nationality and race, it proclaims a universal religion and opens a fountain



of pardon and peace, where the Jew and the Gentile, the Greek and the barbarian, the freeman and the slave, on the single condition of renouncing sin and turning to God, may receive the same spiritual and eternal blessings and unite in a common brotherhood of faith and love. It is so pliable and applicable, so free and independent in its own elevated sphere, that it can accommodate itself to every condition and can be practised in every calling of life. It requires no man to give up his occupation after conversion, unless it be sinful in its nature; but remaining in it, he should faithfully serve God and honor his profession. If a slave can legitimately gain his freedom, so much the better, for freedom is the normal condition of man; but if he cannot, he need not be discouraged, for by faith in Christ he is a freeman in the highest and best sense of the term, a brother and fellow-heir, with his believing master, of eternal glory in heaven. Civil bondage may be a great evil, but not near as great as the moral bondage of sin; civil freedom may be a great good, but only temporal at best, and not to be compared with the spiritual freedom which elevates the humblest Christian slave far above his heathen master. All earthly distinctions and blessings vanish into utter insignificance when compared with the eternal realities of the kingdom of heaven.

This is clearly the view which St. Paul takes in the following passages:

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond (*doulos*) nor free (*eleutheros*), there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.” Gal. iii. 28.

“Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond *nor* free: but Christ is all in all.” Col. iii. 11.

“For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether *we be* Jews or Gentiles, whether *we be* bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.” 1 Cor. xii. 13.

“Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called. Art thou called *being* a servant? care not for it; but if thou mayest be made free, use *it* rather [namely *freedom*].\* For he that is called in

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\* It is a singular fact that Chrysostom, and the ancient commentators, supply *δουλεία*, *slavery*, to the verb in the sense: even if, or although thou mayest be



the Lord, *being* a servant, is the Lord's freeman: likewise also he that is called, *being* free, is Christ's servant. Ye are bought with a price: be not ye the servants of men. Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God." 1 Cor. vii. 20-24.

How widely different this position and language of the inspired apostle, who was the greatest benefactor of the slave and the most effectual, because the wisest emancipationist, from that of our modern Abolitionists of the infidel type, who secularize the holy philanthropy of the Gospel, subordinate the spiritual relations to the temporal, magnify the slavery question above every other moral question, denounce slavery under every form, in fierce, bitter, fanatical language, as the greatest sin and crime of our age and country, and our federal constitution, owing to its connection with it, as a "covenant with death and an agreement with hell!"

From this elevated stand-point above the changing and passing distinctions of time and sense, the apostles approach the master and the servant alike with the same call to repent and believe, with the same offer of the gospel salvation, requiring the same change of their heart, though not of their outward condition, admitting both to the Christian Church, inviting them to the same table of the Lord, and urging them as church members to a faithful discharge of the general Christian duties and of those special duties which grow out of their legal and social relation to each other. Take the following exhortations:

Eph. vi. 5-9: "Servants (*douloi*), be obedient to them that are *your* masters (*tois kyriois*) according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; not with eye service as men-pleasers, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God

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free, remain rather a slave in order to show the more by contrast thy spiritual freedom. But Calvin, Grotius, Whitby, Doddridge, Olshausen, Neander and nearly all modern interpreters (except De Wette and Meyer) supply *ἐλευθερία*, *freedom*,—an exposition already mentioned although not approved by Chrysostom, and clearly preferable on account of the verb *use*, the particles *but* and *rather* (*ἀλλὰ—μᾶλλον*) and of v. 23 ("be not ye the servants of men"), as well as for internal reasons. For it can not be doubted for a moment that Paul, himself a Roman citizen, regarded freedom as the normal and far preferable state, wherever it could be legitimately and honorably attained.



from the heart ; with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men : knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether *he be* bond or free.—And ye masters (*kyrioi*), do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening : knowing that your Master also is in heaven ; neither is there respect of persons with him.”

Col. iii. 22–25 : “ Servants obey in all things *your* masters according to the flesh ; not with eyeservice as men-pleasers ; but in singleness of heart, fearing God ; and whatsoever ye do, do *it* heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men ; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance : for ye serve the Lord Christ. But he that doeth wrong, shall receive for the wrong which he hath done : and there is no respect of persons.”

Col. iv. 1 : “ Masters, give unto *your* servants that which is just and equal ; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.”

1 Tim. vi. 1–2 : “ Let as many servants as are under the yoke [i. e. bond servants] count their own masters worthy of all honor, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed. And they that have believing masters, let them not despise *them*, because they are brethren ; but rather do *them* service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit. These things teach and exhort.”

Tit. ii. 9, 10 : “ *Exhort* servants to be obedient unto their own masters, *and* to please *them* well in all *things* [which legitimately belong to them in their capacity as masters] ; not answering again ; not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity ; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.”

1 Peter ii. 18–20 : “ Servants (*oiketai*, domestic slaves, or household servants) *be* subject to *your* masters (*tois despotaïs*) with all fear ; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is *it*, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently ? but if, when ye do well, and suffer *for it*, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.”

The sense of all these passages is plain and can not be mistaken, except under the influence of the strongest prejudice against slavery under every form.

First as to the servants, they are nowhere exhorted or advised to run away from their masters, however hard their condition may have been and no doubt was at the time, especially in heathen families, nor to revolt and disobey, but on the contrary to obey their masters, whether heathen or Jewish or Christian, whether hard and cruel or gentle and kind, in all things belonging to their proper



authority and not conflicting with the authority of God and the law of conscience, and to obey cheerfully, in the fear of God and from a sense of duty, and thus to adorn and commend their holy profession; remembering always in their outward bondage that they enjoy spiritual freedom in Christ which no man could take from them, and that in the prospect of everlasting glory in heaven they might well forgo the comparatively small advantage of civil freedom in this present transient life.

Secondly the masters are nowhere required or even advised to emancipate their slaves. This matter, like all direct control over private possessions and secular business, the apostles regarded as lying beyond their proper authority; for Christ himself, with His unfailing wisdom, refused to be a divider of property, and simply warned the contending parties against covetousness (Luke xii. 14. Hence they left it to the free choice of the slaveholders and their own sense of duty, which in this case depends upon the effects of the measure or the probable benefit arising from it to both parties, especially the slave himself. Christ never alludes to the subject of emancipation in his personal teaching; but if the servant of the gentile centurion was a slave, as in all probability he was,\* we would have a strong proof from his own mouth for the perfect compatibility of slaveholding with a high order of Christian piety; for he said of the centurion: "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel" (Matth. viii. 10; Luke vii. 9). The apostles expressly denounce men-stealing or—if you choose to give the word *andrapodistes* this wider sense—slave-trading (1 Tim. i. 10); but they never enumerate slaveholding in any of their catalogues of sins and crimes, however complete and minute;† they nowhere make non-slaveholding a term of church membership; on the contra-

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\* In Luke vii. 2 he is called δούλος, *doulos* and in Matth. viii. 6 παῖς, *pais*, which is the least ignominious term for slave. It is evident both from Matth. viii. 9 and Luke vii. 8, that the centurion had many soldiers and servants under his authority. He was probably a proselyte of the gate, or a half convert to Judaism, but certainly uncircumcised, and hence held up to the Jews proper as an example of faith.

† For instance Rom. i. 29–31; Gal. v. 19–21; compare Matth. xv. 19;



ry, St. Paul speaks of certain masters of "servants under the yoke," i. e., slaveholders, who are "faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit" (1 Tim. vi. 1, 2); and addresses Philemon, who was a slaveholder at the time, as "a brother, dearly beloved and fellow-laborer," that is, either an officer of the congregation at Colosse, or an active lay-member (Philem. v. 1, 7). On the other hand the apostles still less recommend the masters to sell their slaves and to make money out of them, and by doing so perhaps to sunder the sacred ties between husband and wife, parents and children. But they uniformly exhort them to give to their slaves all that is just and equitable; to treat them with humanity, kindness and charity, even as they would like to be treated according to the well known maxim of Christ; to forbear even threatening, not to mention those cruel punishments which the Roman law authorized and which were so common at the time; and in this whole relation to remember that they, too, have a Master in heaven, that the Christian slaves are freedmen of Christ and their brethren by faith, and that God is no respecter of persons.

The most striking example of the moral reformation which the spirit of Christianity carried into the institution of slavery, without interfering with its legal rights, is furnished by St. Paul's Epistle to Philemon. The apostle had converted the runaway slave Onesimus at Rome, and although he might have made good use of him, he sent him back to his rightful master Philemon, yet no longer as a servant or slave (*doulos*) only, "but more than a servant, a brother beloved, especially to me, but now much more unto thee, both in the flesh [i. e., in his temporal or earthly relations as a servant, compare Eph. vi. 5] and in the Lord" [i. e., his spiritual relation as a Christian brother], adding the request to receive him as he would the apostle himself (v. 16, 17).\*

Here we have the whole doctrine and practice of Christianity on this subject as in a nut-shell. Paul exhibits in this most touching letter the highest type of the Christian

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Mark vii. 21, 22; 1 Cor. v. 11; vi. 9, 10; Eph. v. 5; Col. iii. 8, 9; 1 Tim. i. 9, 10; 2 Tim. iii. 2, 8, 4.

\* That Onesimus was a slave, is manifest both from the general tenor of the



gentleman and philanthropist. He distinctly acknowledges the legal and social relation as it existed between Philemon and Onesimus, and combines the strictest regard for the rights of the one with the deepest interest in the welfare of the other. He addresses the slaveholder as a "brother, dearly beloved and fellow-laborer," and restores to him his servant, but as a Christian brother, pleading for him as for his own child, promising reparation if he had done wrong, demanding a remission of all penalty, soliciting the sympathy and affection of the master for the penitent fugitive, and promising to receive these favors as bestowed upon himself. This is the love of an inspired apostle, himself a prisoner at the time, for a poor runaway slave! And yet it is only a spark of that love which induced the eternal Son of God to shed his own blood for the sins of the world.

If our Southern slaveholders were all animated by this heavenly spirit of love and would act on Paul's request to Philemon, they would indeed become the greatest benefactors of the unfortunate negro race.

It is perfectly evident then that Christianity made no direct and immediate change in the outward legal and social relation of slavery; but wherever it prevailed, it transfused a new spirit into the institution, changed the hard Roman slavery into a mild patriarchal service and subordinated the social distinction of the two parties to the religious equality and brotherhood in Christ, their common Lord and Saviour. It cured the root of the evil and produced a new order of society even where the outward form continued unchanged. It always works, like leaven, from within, and not from without; it frees the soul first and then the body. The opposite process, commencing with external and sudden emancipation, would only have done harm and

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Epistle, and the implication in *οὐκ ἔτι ὡς δοῦλον*, *no more as a slave*, v. 16, and is universally conceded by all ancient and modern commentators of any note. It was left for Mr. Albert Barnes, in the nineteenth century, to make the great discovery that Onesimus *may* have been an *apprentice*, because "it is quite as common for apprentices to run away, as it is for slaves!" Legendary tradition relates, that he was afterwards set free by Philemon and became a Christian bishop of Beroea in Macedonia.



involved master and slave in common ruin, before the true spiritual remedy could have been applied.

The external extinction of slavery, we all know, was the slow process of centuries and is not yet completed to this day. It still exists under various forms over a great part of the Christian world. Nevertheless the progress is steady and irresistible. Wherever the spirit of Christianity, which is the spirit of universal justice and love, works its way into the fibres of domestic and public life, it inevitably raises the intellectual and moral condition of the slave population, and thus prepares them for the right use of a higher social position, so that in due time, all other interests of civilization concurring, the legal emancipation becomes not only practicable and harmless, but desirable and beneficial to both parties. In this gradual, peaceful and righteous way Christianity mastered the Jewish, Greek, and Roman slavery of ancient times; it then modified and conquered the various forms of bondage and vassalage among the Romanic and Germanic nations of the middle ages; it is now assisting in the gradual emancipation of the twenty-two millions of serfs in Russia; and it will no doubt in its own good way and time solve also the difficult problem of African servitude in America for the common benefit of the white and the black races, which are here mysteriously and providentially brought together.

Of all forms of slavery the American is the most difficult to dispose of, because it is not only a question of domestic institution and political œconomy, but of race. *The negro question lies far deeper than the slavery question.* Emancipation here is no solution. The negro question was never presented in such magnitude and with such responsibility to any other people; for England and France had to do with it only in their distant colonies, and instead of solving the problem by immediate and absolute emancipation, they have ruined their colonies and presented the question of race in a more difficult form. Should we then not have patience and forbearance and wait the time which Providence in its own wisdom and mercy has appointed for the solution of a problem which thus far has baffled the wisdom of the wisest statesmen. But the process of solution



has undoubtedly begun long since. We should never ungratefully forget, amidst all the exciting passions, criminations and recriminations of political parties, that in the hands of Providence and under the genial influence of Christianity this American slavery in spite of all its incidental evils and abuses has already accomplished much good. It has been thus far a wholesome training school for the negro from the lowest state of heathenism and barbarism to some degree of Christian civilization, and in its ultimate result it will no doubt prove an immense blessing to the whole race of Ham.

The less the people in the North meddle with the system in the way of political agitation and uncharitable abuse, the sooner this desirable end, so dear to every Christian and patriotic heart, will be reached. The sooner we take the vexing and perplexing question out of the turmoil of federal politics, and leave it with the several slave States, in the hands of Christian philanthropy, and of an all-wise Providence, the better for the peace of the whole country.

In the mean time it is the duty of the slaveholding States, on whom the whole responsibility and legislative authority properly devolves, not, indeed, to precipitate the four millions of negroes into a state of independence for which they are wholly unprepared and which could only be disastrous to them, but by separate State action and remedial codes to diminish as much as possible the evils and to prevent the abuses of slavery in their own midst, to provide for the proper moral and religious training of the negroes committed to their care, and thus to make the institution beneficial to both races while it lasts, and to prepare the way for its ultimate extinction without injury to either. In this noble effort the people of the South eminently deserve the hearty sympathy, the friendly counsel, and the liberal coöperation of their brethren in the North.

This is the Bible view and the Bible remedy of slavery. It is as true and effective to day as ever. On this basis alone can peace be restored, the Union preserved, and the greatest modern problem of political œconomy and Christian philanthropy solved for the good of America, of Africa and the world.